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DAY DREAM
&
EVEN SONG

BY

Frederic Fairchild Sherman



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FOR ELOISE

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S O N N E T S

THE INTERPRETER

If in my heart I heard as you can hear
The happy birds and insects murmuring,
In winter I should think that it were spring
And so be glad as you are all the year ;
Or if to you I could be always near
And know the joy of every song you sing,
Into my heart the music you might bring
Of every sound of summer that is dear.

I never knew such happiness as that
Until, enraptured and alone, I sat
And listened to the melody you made ;
And when I closed my eyes it was to dream
Of some green margin of a meadow-stream
That sang to me beside it in the shade.

A LOVE-THOUGHT

The thought of you is like a breath of spring,
Sweet with a promise even as the wind ;
It warms my heart again and clears my mind,
And sets the flowers of pleasure blossoming.
Love, like a bird, returns with it to sing ;
Life leaves the shadows everywhere behind ; —
It bubbles up and hastens forth to find
The sunshine bright with buds and birds a-wing.

And, like the fragrance of the woodland breeze,
This precious thought is sweet with memories
Of long ago when we as children met, —
Of other days which you for me made bright
With so much happiness and love and light
That while I live I never shall forget.

A SONG-DREAM

M. G. P.

Remembering your music in the night,
I woke from dreams, and listening I heard
Ethereal voices where the zephyr stirred
Amid the green leaves trembling with delight;
From distant fields down airy paths moon-white,
Floated from time to time a fairy word,
Melodious, — the lyric of some bird
That sang to cheer its solitary flight.

Then Sleep's soft fingers brushed mine eyelids o'er,
The zephyr hushed, the bird's voice fainter grew
Until at last I slumbered as before,
To dream again, and in this dream I knew
A song familiar and love's voice once more,
And love — which is another name for you.

LOVE'S SPRINGTIDE

Henceforth my life shall ever know the Spring,
And from my heart where love has made her nest
There shall go forth upon the lyric quest
Glad thoughts, from day to day new-born, to sing
My joy through all the earth like birds a-wing:
The voice of Love shall steal into my rest
In dreams of song, and every dawn be blest
With music sweet beyond imagining.

So shall I share the rapture of the lark,
The nightingale's enchantment in the dark,
The ecstasy of every star above;
Song shall be mine until that day when Death
Shall come to me and hush with frozen breath
The hopes and joys that warm the nest of Love

THE AWAKENING

Hearing her sing in some dim place remote
I marvelled at the beauty of each word,
As one who hears the lyric of a bird
With April's gladness bubbling in its throat.
And while I listened so, one ringing note
Divinely sweet above the rest I heard,
And in my heart its answering echo stirred
Setting a thousand memories afloat.

Then I whose lips the winter's cold had sealed
Sought once again to fashion into rhyme
The prisoned rapture of my silence long,
And, one by one, I felt the fetters yield
Until the world about me grew sublime
Touched by the joy of love's immortal song.

THE LOVE LETTER

This fluttering sheet of paper, snowy white,
A dove of Venus is whose glad behest
It is to bear my message on its breast
Unto my Sweet across the leagues of night.
And when beneath the singing stars its flight
Is done, then shall it find a downy nest
Amid the laces of her gown and rest
Upon her bosom, dreaming of delight.

Up then, my bird, and spread your pinions wide,
The quest is happy though the way be long :
Joy your companion is, and Love your guide,
And hope within your heart beats ever strong ;
Godspeed ! would I might journey at your side
And hear with you her lips repeat my song.

CONFESSION

When first I held you in my arms and pressed
 You to my heart, lo, like the lifting tide,
 I felt your love beat up against my side
With murmurings of secrets half-confessed !
Like the refreshing waves your kisses blessed
 My lips, when laughingly and happy-eyed
 You on my shoulder dropped your head to hide
Your joy and dreamed a moment on my breast.

The wonder of the ever-changing skies,
 Of clouds and mists, and every glorious star
Is in the beauty of your wondrous eyes ;
 The mystery of lispings gales afar
Stirs in the softest whisper of your sighs,
 And Love makes me a poet where you are.

THE DAWN OF LOVE

Sweeter than any earthly dawn is this,
The morning of our love, when her fond eyes
Open like little flowers of Paradise
And fill the garden place of dreams with bliss.
No glory of the daybreak do I miss —
Blushes that rival daybreak's rosy skies, —
Smiles that are sunshine laughing in disguise, —
And all the sweets of summer in her kiss.

Her hair is like a golden mist above
The snowy bosom, that unfathomed sea,
The undercurrent and the tide whereof
Are but the yearning of her heart for me;
And in the lyric whisper of her love
There is a murmur of eternity.

IN CITY PENT

Far from the mountains and the meadows I,
 Who love the quiet country, in this place
 Of strange unrest, turn thitherward my face,
Tired of the noise and homesick for the sky.
There sing the birds that in the days gone by
 Brought joy to me, and there the sweet flowers grace
 The path that led to Nature's kind embrace,
And Echo lingers there with fond reply.

O for a breath of fragrance and a sight
Of blue hills swimming in the morning light,
 And purple valleys streaked with silvery streams!
O for the open country and the long
Days made miraculous by sky and song,
 And leafy slumbers filled with pleasant dreams!

THE MORNING WALK

The birds are building in the budding trees
And making music wonderfully sweet
To me as I pass down the village street,
Stirred by innumerable memories
Of other days as beautiful as these.

The pansies lift their lovely eyes to meet
The glad smile of the summer sun, and greet
Me with a fragrant whisper in the breeze.

Into the garden of my heart I stray
And there I find the flowers of yesterday,
The sunlight of the summer and the past,—
Remembered voices sing to me of love,
As from the heaven glorious above,
And I, enraptured, answer them at last.

SEA AND LAND

Vexed with herself, the Sea returning sighs
To think she scorned the ever steadfast Land,
Who waits for her and reaches either hand
Under the sombre shadow of the skies,
That as a cloak across his shoulders lies.
She answers not the jealous Wind's demand,
But hurries on until upon the strand
She turns unto her Lover with fond eyes.

There as of old at dawn again they meet,
And of the day the promises are sweet
As those forgotten were. The sunlight beams
Upon her face half-hidden in his breast,
Where for a moment's space of peace and rest
She gives herself to slumber and to dreams.

LOVE

Scorned, spurned and scoffed, I am content to stand
 Within the shadow of your heart and wait,
 As though a beggar at its iron gate,
To ask one word of you who have command :
And it may be ere dusk the restless band
 That hunt you with the keen-edged swords of hate
 Will find your hidden refuge, but the fate
That enters it must first with me try hand.

The wanderer who hovers there to win
A smile from you will let no Evil in.
 His only weapon is the steel of truth,
A single sword to keep the world away, —
But many are the foes have fallen prey
 Unto the courage of immortal youth !

FOR A COPY OF KEATS'S POEMS

You taught my eager heart to understand
The joyousness of love, and, opening this book,
Bade me, as from a casement wide, to look
Through it upon the beauty of the land
That sun and bloom make bright; and with your hand
In mine the friends of Sorrow I forsook
To listen to the lyric of the brook
Whose songs are writ in water and in sand.

There with the lilies white we used to dream
The starlit hours of summer evening through,
With Keats clear singing and the dulcet stream
Flooding our hearts with happiness anew, —
A mingled music that must always seem
All his, remembering this gift from you.

THE DREAM

Serene she sits before the hearth's bright gold,
Her withered cheeks transfigured with the glow,
And, pondering the days of long ago,
The scroll of memory her eyes behold.
Unto her heart it seems, now she is old,
That Youth is come again, as if the snow
Of years had vanished leaving her to know
The Spring, and see its loveliness unfold.

The wreath of age rests lightly on the brow
Where once the bridal roses breathed above
Her girlish rapture in the fragrant air;
She hears celestial voices singing now,
And back from out the dark her absent Love
Returning, smiles to make her dream more fair.

MEMORIES

Above the busy world at dusk I know
 Each day an hour of happiness complete,
 For then I sit within the window-seat
And dream of home, and Her, and long ago.
The silence in the city far below,
 The sunset as it glorifies the street,
 Each to my homesick heart is ever sweet
As the soft winds that wander to and fro.

There oftentimes the blessed memory
Of other days makes glad the dark for me ;
 I hear the happy singing of the birds
In bowers of bloom, I breathe the fragrance borne
Across the world from out the Orient morn,
 And listening I hear again Her words.

DUSK

The evening hour of love's brief happy day,
And where is She now while the last sands run ?
Her smile I welcomed with the rising sun,
Nor dreamed the dusk would find her far away.
I, on the threshold in the last warm ray,
Remember how when morn had but begun
We stood together here. The dream is done,
And in the shadow all alone I stay.

The world is quiet, and its quietness
Is in my mind where all thoughts come and go
Unnoticed as the birds that fail to bless
This sad hour with a single song I know ;
And hope within my heart grows less and less
And dies out with the day's last golden glow.

SLEEP

Lead me, kind Sleep, unto the land of Dreams;
There I with all fantastic Fancies gray
Through moonlit groves of sombre yews will stray,
Or with them wander by Life's silent streams
Where fire-fly joys shed their inconstant gleams,
And flowers that never know the light of day
Breathe on the passing winds their souls away, —
For this my stricken heart a pleasure deems.

And if upon the journey I should die,
Or, charmed by force of omnipresent power,
Should leave you at the midnight's lonely hour, —
Search not the glooms for me. Wherever I
May chance, it cannot be, kind Sleep, more far
Than this from where my dear dead comrades are.

REMEMBRANCE

Where memory broods, sphinx-like, with folded wings,
Far in the miraged desert of man's mind,
The caravans of thought through dim ways wind
Unto the tombs amid the wreck of things.
Fearless forever in their wanderings,
And leaving all the wondrous world behind,
They search the wilderness only to find
The pyramids beside Sahara's springs.

Close by the monuments that tower above
The heart's first dead, a living stream of love
Keeps green through all the years one garden spot;
And often, pilgrim-wise, our thoughts retrace
The weary way unto that sacred place,
Remembering whom the world remembers not.

LYRICS

SONG OF A BLIND PILGRIM AT
THE GATE OF HEAVEN

Blind though I be I have not missed the road,
Nor have I stumbled with misfortune's load ;

While others following the sun by day,
And stars by night, have somehow lost the way.

And there are those, more strong than I to bear
The weight of weariness, have fallen there.

Lord I thank Thee, both for the inner light
Which through the darkness guided me aright.

And for the voice which, when my strength was gone,
With words of loving-kindness urged me on.

THE TEMPLE IN THE TWILIGHT

The lyric of the timid thrush
That fills the star-gemmed arc
A hymn is, after which the hush
Of dusk, and then the dark.

The fragrant garden blossoms bright,
That waver to and fro,
Are censers from which, through the night,
The winds sweet incense blow.

The moon, the sister of the sun,
Who lifts a face so pale
In worship, is a patient nun,
Half hidden in her veil.

And I — a wanderer am I,
Who, turning from my way,
Have entered in this Temple by
The bright door of the day.

Alone and free of every care,
I linger here, and long
My lips move in sweet words of prayer
After the evening song.

A PILGRIM

Since first I started toward the goal
I often pause and pray
For strength as mother said I should
When traveling away.

And, one by one, my eager friends
Who hurried on before
Have fallen, and for God I bear
The burdens that they bore.

So, as I struggle with the weight
Of other people's care,
I am content if I shall be
Indeed the last one there.

A SAINT

She made a sacrifice of love
To God above,
And when He reads the open scroll
Of her sweet soul
He will find nothing written there
But hymn and prayer.

Her thoughts were like the lights divine
Before a shrine ;
And she it was, a patient nun,
Who kept each one
About the altar always bright
Both day and night.

THE LIGHT OF DREAM

When evening comes upon the skies
And sets one star a gleam
Sleep shuts the sunshine from my eyes
And lights them with a dream.

Then silence folds its wings above,
But not the whispering wind,
And though I sleep the voice of love
Makes music in my mind.

The dark a menace cannot be —
The journey to the day, —
Love ever to companion me,
A dream to light the way!

THE TEMPLE IN THE TREES

Like priests the shadows to and fro
In flowing raiment come and go ;
The wild flowers bend in worship there,
And close their lovely eyes in prayer.

The silver mist like incense lifts,
And through the silence slowly drifts ;
Then through the woods from feathered throats
A hymn of praise to Heaven floats.

There day by day, a happy throng,
The birds and flowers with prayer and song
Unite in worship, and above
With song and sweetness lift their love.

FANCY

A form of mist by sunlight kissed
Borne by the wind along;
Such is the dream which like a gleam
Shines in the poet's song.

What is the thought by fancy wrought
In love's fantastic mood?
Ever anon it comes — is gone
Half glimpsed, half understood.

THE THINGS THAT LAST

One pearl of thought the flood of rhyme
 May cast up from life's deep,
Which left upon the sands of Time,
 The world will care to keep.

Some little deed of kindness done
 For love's dear sake may be,
Of all life's works, the only one
 To hold man's memory.

Remember, nothing is so small
 But that, when life is past,
It may not chance to be, of all,
 The one thing that will last.

THE YOUNG POET

Life's new and pleasant paths he trod
 Among the sunlit hills of truth,
And lifted up his heart to God,
 Who smiled upon the dream of youth.

There listened he while nature taught ;
 There felt his timid heart grow strong ;
And there an inspiration caught
 From Heaven that filled his soul with song.

APPRECIATION

Across the world, on tireless wings
Of love, his fancy flies —
A happy bird which always sings
Or bright or dark the skies.

And if the song faint answer wakes
From heart of one at rest —
That single word it is that makes
The poet's singing blest.

THE STORM

A sudden gleam of anger in her eyes —
Mark how the lightning plays across the skies !

Deep-drawn her breathing, — lo, it is the breeze
That drives the clouds above and twists the trees !

Soon, then, her tears fall swiftly like the rain ;
She smiles, and all the world is bright again.

ON A PICTURE

Among the faces of these girls —
Which seem to break forth from their curls
As flowers from buds — is one that glows
All crimson like a blushing rose,
And one that lifts itself on high —
A lily looking to the sky,
Another with a pansy's grace
Half hides amid the leafy lace;
And all are sweet, and all are fair
Like beauty in a boutonnière —
A dream of loveliness! Give me
This garden in epitome.

THE TIDE

High in the quiet heaven of my heart
The thought of her shines like a moon above,
And I can feel in every conscious part
The joyous lifting of the tide of love.

As when the waters of the summer sea
Run in untroubled by the restless wind,
This flood comes home at even, silently,
And breaks in whispered music on my mind.

VESPERS

The stars at dusk, great candles, light
The blue dome of the sky;
The wind, a prayer, from out the night
Goes up to God on high.

The choir of Heaven down the aisle
Of Nature's temple goes,
And through the twilight drifts awhile
The incense of the rose.

Silence, God's benediction, ends
The vespers; and, it seems,
Once more Peace like a dove descends
Upon the world in dreams.

A SONG IN SEASON

The madcap Spring came yesterday,
 And Winter died ;
Happy at last, he passed away,
 She at his side.

Now night and day the wayward child
 Is drowned in tears
Till Summer, wakened by her wild
 Grief, reappears.

THINGS FORGOTTEN

The beauty of the cloudless skies
Reflected in her upturned eyes;
The gentle motion of her breast;
The pearls that like the foamy crest
Of one white wave upon the sea
There caught the light continually;
The fragrance, and the touch of her
Sweet breath to my flushed face; the stir
Of summer wind; and all that we
At that time said, the melody
Of mating birds—these I recall;
But she it is remembers all.
And so I love to sit apart
With her, and, feeling how her heart
Beats fondly 'gainst my own, to hear
Of things forgotten far more dear.

EXPERIENCE

One loved me once, I cannot tell you how
Save that it was as no one loves me now.

Playmates in childhood we, — the one sweet place
Of refuge from the world was our embrace.

Contented were we in our dream and free
From ridicule that mocks the memory.

So short the time, — it seems as but a day.
Insidious Sin stole Innocence away !

QUATRAINS

SUNSET

A siren in the sea unrolled
The glory of her hair;
And on the waves, a mass of gold,
The sunlight rested there.

TEARS OF GLADNESS

These happy tears, like drops of dew
 Upon the flowers, suffuse her eyes
Which like the blossoms, smiling too,
 Reflect the glory of the skies.

LOVE LETTERS

Your letters come to me like birds,
And always in the air
The music of their happy words
Is with me everywhere.

A MINIATURE

Her hair is like a golden mist,
Wind-blown, sun-kissed ;
And like a little sunlit space
Of heaven, her face.

RECONCILIATION

Two children who had quarreled, and had walked
Half home in silence, hearing how the birds
Sang to each other everywhere, found words,
And each forgave the other then, and talked.

THE VAGRANT

Regardless of the Maker's perfect art,
Sin like a vagrant is, who stands about
The gateway of the city of a heart,
And waits to enter in should Love pass out.

SILENCE

Her weary head poised on one upraised hand
Sweet Silence whom we all love sits apart,
And none of us who would can understand
What thought is hidden in her aching heart.

HEARING AND SPEECH

If I were deaf, and yet the small voice heard —
A whisper only, softer than the wind ;
Though dumb, the prayer for which I had no word
God in the silence would be sure to find.

THE SEED

This bush of bloom that sweetens so the wind,
Was once a seed the wind dropped carelessly ;
One thought forgotten, flowering in me,
Has filled with wondrous happiness my mind.

STORM IN THE HIGHLANDS

Half-hidden in the darkness of the night,
Like sentinels the mountains stand before
The camp; beyond them flash the swords of light
And far away the guns of thunder roar.

ON A FLY-LEAF OF SHELLEY'S POEMS

Herein all words are living things that die, —
Whose spirits are the memories that throng
The night, and haunt our dreaming, by and by,
With half-remembered cadences of song.

SYMPATHY

A flock of birds that far from woodland trees
Have built and sing within the city mart,
The tenderest of thoughts and sympathies
Are sometimes found housed in a busy heart.

AN ODE

*"Queen of the wide air: thou most lovely queen
Of all the brightness that mine eyes have seen."*

—JOHN KEATS.

THE MOON

I

Sweet lady, I would walk across the night
With you, for now the first fond memory
Of love that was my earliest delight
Into the shadowed dark has driven me:
I crave companionship and I would walk
Alone with you and something learn of her
From whom you with a message may have come.
Aye, I indeed would talk
With you, for I can see your pale lips stir
To tell the broken message of the dumb.

II

And this is why, night after night, you thread
The darkness silently;—or why is it
If not to find and tell me what she said?
I often at the open window sit
And watch your lonely figure passing by
As, heedless of the stars' persistent eyes,
You travel on unto the pearly gate
Of dawn. O tell me why
You wander from the gate of Paradise
Each evening at an early hour or late?

III

Is it that when the Sun is far away
The thought of him beats in your maiden breast,
And you, who have been happy all the day,
When twilight comes can therefore never rest?
Is this the reason why you wander through
The poppied paths of dusk and always seem
Unconscious of the fragrance of the wind?
Or why is it that you
In whose face shines the glory of a dream
A lonely wanderer in Heaven I find?

IV

Are you the ghost of one who searches for
Some wandering soul or, hovering afar,
An Angel, like a mother watching o'er
The couch whereon her sleeping children are?
What thought is it that lights your lovely face
And to your eyes this dewy brilliance brings
That falls upon the world ere you have passed,
And in that starlit space
A soaring lark of Heaven so sweetly sings
That all the world forgets to dream at last?

V

Ah no, upon some mountain veiled in mist,
 Unfrequented by man, I think you meet
 A lover, and that there you keep a tryst
 With him, for always with reluctant feet
 You travel homeward through the shadows dim.
 I think the thought that brings that blessed smile
 And fills your eager heart with happiness
 Must be the thought of him
 Who is forever with you even while
 You wander, and he thinks of you no less.

THE ONE LYRIC

*Upon the world's great shore in song
Like waves the words beat to and fro,—
A lyric tide that sings along
The ways of life wherein I go.*

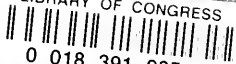
*Their messages I set in rhyme
And dream that I may yet find one
That shall endure until the time
When the last songtide is outrun.*

*I ask but once to touch the dust
Of this old earth to melody,—
To leave one lyric I can trust
To live for all eternity.*

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